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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

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For immediate release

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CALCULATING ANIMAL UNITS FOR POULTRY PRODUCERS, OTHERS

DES MOINES — It's important for livestock and poultry producers to calculate animal units correctly, because the number of animal units determines the environmental regulations that must be met.

In 2003, legislation created new categories for turkeys weighing less than seven pounds and chickens weighing less than three pounds, acknowledging that immature animals are considerably different in size and manure production from adult animals.

“To avoid any confusion when determining animal unit capacity, it's important for producers to use the maximum or market weight for the calculations,” said Randy Clark, an attorney with the DNR.

Animal units are calculated by multiplying the number of animals by an equivalency factor. This factor helps equalize the potential for environmental impacts from animals as different as cattle, swine and poultry. For example, the factor for one dairy cow is 1.4, while one finishing hog has a factor of 0.4. That means that 350 finishing hogs would be equivalent to 100 dairy cows, with both groups having 140 animal units.

The new equivalency factor for turkeys weighing less than seven pounds is 0.0085. For turkeys weighing seven pounds or more the factor is 0.018. Chickens weighing less than three pounds have an equivalency factor of 0.0025, while chickens weighing three pounds or more have an equivalency factor of 0.010.

“The changes in equivalency factors aligned the poultry industry with existing regulations for immature swine and cattle operations, allowing producers to have more immature animals before meeting environmental thresholds for permits and manure management plans,” added Clark.

Maximum weight during the production cycle is used because of changes in state law in 2002 that created the term “animal units.” Unlike the previous term “animal weight capacity,” animal unit capacity does not hinge upon average weight during the production cycle.

For more information, contact Gene Tinker at 515-281-3103.

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COMMERCIAL MANURE APPLICATORS NEED VEHICLE LETTERING

DES MOINES — Commercial manure applicators have needed lettering on their vehicles since 1999, but a new Iowa law requires the business license number to be displayed also.

“We’ve had a number of questions about the signage, so we want folks to know exactly what goes on the side of the truck or tank,” said Jeff Prier, coordinator of the DNR certification program.

Prier said the business license number, which is new this year, along with the company address and the manager’s name, must be displayed prominently on the side of any vehicle that is used to haul manure on public roads.

The lettering must be three inches high.

To obtain the new license number, Prier suggests companies that have applied for a license, but not yet received it, should call Carol Arpy, DNR licensing bureau, at 515-281-6581.

While employees have had to be trained or tested, and certified since 1999, law changes in 2003 specifically required businesses that commercially apply manure to be licensed.

For more information, contact Jeff Prier at the Spencer DNR field office, 712-262-4177.